

Amendments to the Specification:

Replace the following paragraphs in their entirety.

[0028] Referring now to FIG. 2, the sternal closure device is generally referred to by reference numeral 20 and includes a first bearing member 21, a second bearing member 22, and a sternum joining member 23 having an axis 24, a first end 25 and a second end 26. The first bearing member 21 may have a sternum contacting side 21b, a surface that faces away from the sternum 21d, a sidewall 21a, optionally a protrusion 21c having a first end 21g and second end 21h, where the first end 21g of the protrusion 21c may be attached to the sternum contacting side 21b, the second end 21h of the protrusion 21c extending away from the sternum contacting side 21b. The second bearing member 22 may have a sternum contacting side 22b, a surface that faces away from the sternum 22d, optionally a protrusion 22c having a first end 22g and second end 22h, where the first end 22g of the protrusion 22c may be attached to the sternum contacting side 22b, the second end 22h of the protrusion 22c extending away from the sternum contacting side 22b.

[0030] The first end 25 of the sternum joining member 23 may be rigidly, integrally, slidably or releasably attached to the sternum contacting side 21b or optionally the protrusion 21c of the first bearing member 21, or in a manner that allows some rotation of the first bearing member 21 about the axis 24. For example, the protrusion 21c may have a lumen 21f that the first end 25 of the sternum joining member 23 is passed through. The first end 25 of the sternum joining member 23 may be flared 25a so as to prevent being pulled out of the lumen 21f when tension is applied during closure. Alternatively, the first end 25 of the sternum joining member 23 may be abutted against the sternum contacting side 21b of the first bearing member 21 while still allowing rotation thereon. This will allow for minor adjustments of the position of the first bearing member 21 on the sternum 10. Alternatively, the protrusion 21c on the first bearing member 21 may be rigidly fixed to the first end 25 of the sternum joining member 23 by welding or having the first bearing member 21 and entire sternum joining member 23 fabricated as a single piece through casting, molding, machining or other means known to those skilled in the art of fabricating small parts.